



# The Bear Facts Gazette

Published by the Children's Cancer Fund – Winter 2008/2009

## 11th Annual Children's Cancer Fund Walk

**October 4, 2008 – FDR State Park, Yorktown Heights, NY –** Ideal weather conditions, over 700 smiling participants, countless volunteers, generous sponsors, and supporters all came together at the 11th Annual Children's Cancer Fund Walk without a hitch. The fantastic event raised over \$105,000 for research and patient services and provided a great way for participants to get some exercise at the same time. 100.7 WHUD radio personality Andy Bale served as Walk Marshall and CCF founder and medical director Dr. S. Jayabose, or Dr. Jay as so many have come to know him by, led the pack of eager and dedicated walkers and walk teams. A sea of Children's Cancer Fund Walk t-shirts flooded the Park while many of the larger teams– like "Team Sammy K" and "Team Diego"–were easy to spot with their colorful banners and posters.

**Many thanks to the 11th Annual CCF Walk sponsors, including:** Paul Trefz, Brad Fund, McDonald's-Yorktown, NY, Desert Moon Grill, Accredo, PepsiCo, Barton Orchards, Shaw's, Luciano's Cafe, Westchester Medical Imaging, Super Deli of Somers, and My Child's Hand.

**Additional appreciation goes to the following for their contributions and generosity:**

- Rachel Rivera of "Team Sammy K" for selling her delicious homemade snacks and donating the proceeds to CCF.

- Marian Baade for providing graphic and print support.
- Walk chairperson, Nimmy Jayabose and her remarkable event committee for their countless hours, dedication, and commitment to CCF.
- Volunteer Walk photographer Ed Yarmchuck.

Additional appreciation to: BioScrip, Durants Tents & Events, and Printech.

And an even bigger thank you to all the Walk team captains, team and individual walkers, family and friends for their support and unstoppable energy.

Please visit [www.childrenscancerfund.org](http://www.childrenscancerfund.org) for more great photos and details about this exciting event and to learn more about how you can get involved. Also, mark your calendars for the 12th Annual Children's Cancer Fund Walk to be held on Saturday, October 3, 2009 at FDR State Park.



**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**CCF's 17th Annual Teddy Bear Ball**  
March 21, 2009 • Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown, NY

[www.childrenscancerfund.org](http://www.childrenscancerfund.org)



P.O. Box 658  
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The Bear Facts Gazette is published by the Children's Cancer Fund, a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization, dedicated to funding research programs in childhood cancers and providing support services that improve the quality of life for children with cancer and their families.

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**The Bear Facts Gazette** encourages readers to contribute articles and news on how the Children's Cancer Fund's support services have made a difference in a child's life. Please forward your contribution to above address or email to: [support@childrenscancerfund.org](mailto:support@childrenscancerfund.org)

## A Message From the President



Dear Friends,

This issue of The Bear Facts Gazette features bittersweet news about the retirement of our founder and medical advisor, Dr. Somasundaram Jayabose, in the upcoming new year. Dr. Jay, as he is known by many of his patients and colleagues, founded the Children's Cancer Fund in 1992 at New York Medical College in Valhalla, New York where he currently is Professor of Pediatrics. He is also chief of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital in Valhalla. Dr. Jayabose is recognized by *New York Magazine* as one of the best Pediatric Hematology-Oncology specialists in New York (June 16, 2008 annual Best Doctors issue). But we already know that!

Dr. Jayabose founded the Children's Cancer Fund with a mission to fund basic-science research as well as clinical research in childhood cancer, and to provide better support services that will improve the quality of life for patients and their families. With special expertise including pediatric

leukemias, lymphomas, Hodgkin's Disease, Wilms' Tumor and neuroblastoma, and sickle cell disease and ITP (immune thrombocytopenic purpura), Dr. Jay's initial vision to be part of a group of physicians who will one day cure all children with cancer is getting closer to success.

For nearly seventeen years the Children's Cancer Fund has grown by leaps and bounds under the guidance and compassion of Dr. Jay. His dedication and commitment to advancing pediatric oncology to fight children's cancer is evident in all that he does.

Please join us in honoring Dr. Jayabose at the 17th Annual Children's Cancer Fund Teddy Bear Ball on Saturday, March 21, 2009, at the Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown, New York. I look forward to meeting you at this very special event (more details at [www.childrenscancerfund.org](http://www.childrenscancerfund.org)). If you will not be able to join us, please consider making a contribution in honor of Dr. Jayabose with our secured on-line donation form, or send your tax deductible donation to:

Children's Cancer Fund  
P.O. Box 658  
Millwood, NY 10546

With thanks and appreciation,

John A. Casso  
President

This newsletter is published in proud memory of:

Annika R., 6 yrs.  
Micheal M., 22 yrs.  
Elizabeth D., 8 yrs.  
Dylon M., 8 yrs.



S. Jayabose, MD

## Dr. Jayabose: My Friend, My Savior, My Family

by Christie Pasqua

Dr. Jayabose, or Jay, is a true superman; he spends his days and nights fighting illness and disease, while caring unconditionally about each one of his very lucky patients. My Jay is a gentle, loving and soft spoken man who refuses to give up and has never let me down. Unfortunately, like most of us, my family met Jay when I was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia in December of 1992. He had a tender way of telling my parents that their five year-old daughter had cancer. Jay's energy and confidence assured them that I would be okay. The one thing he did not know was that he would soon be an important part of my family. I did not always know how lucky I was to have him as my doctor and friend. As I grew up, I realized that not only had this man saved my life, but he would continue to be my biggest fan through various parts of my journey. From school plays, birthday parties, and home cooked Indian Cuisine, our bond has continued to grow strong. I'm sure he did not know what he was getting himself into when he became my doctor. He did not know that he would one day be at my 21st birthday party watching me take shots of tequila when just 16 years before he watched a hairless, naive five year-old painting Keds sneakers in her hospital bed for her family. We always had an understanding that I was a loudmouth child and loved to tease him and he would happily giggle at my comments. He has always been there for me; I could call him for anything, even to assist me on a project on the immune system. As I remember the story, it was ten o'clock at night, and Jay had just gotten home from a long night at the hospital, exhausted. He said, "Well, I just got home, when is this due, Christie?" "Seven-thirty tomorrow morning," I answered. Without even a pause, he sat on the phone with me, patiently explaining the immune system until I was able to put my project together. I blamed him that I only received a B on the assignment. He has had to suffer through being the butt of many jokes that are constantly made by most of my family, my dad especially. Although we joke around with him, he has been such a special and influential person in my life. I have so much respect for him and everything he does every single day. I have no doubt in my mind that he will always be there for me, whether it is cancer, a swollen gland, or more importantly, to cheer me on from the front row, camera and all.

## CCF Wishes to Thank...

**The John Hand Memorial Golf Classic** raised donations totaling \$25,000 for CCF in June.

**Fleming & Fleming PLLC** in North Palm Beach, FL for managing an anonymous donation of \$5,000 to CCF.

**Staten Island Technical High School** (NY) raised \$882 for CCF via its "Chelsea's Gifts" program.

**Salesian High School** of New Rochelle, NY raised \$650 for the 2008 Mini-Walk for Michael in June.

**Eric Rivkin** of Greenlawn, NY raised \$485 for CCF in June as President for Big 3-on-3 League.

**Alex Schweitzer** of Tampa, FL, who raised \$65 for CCF on his birthday.

**The Schultz Family** of Warwick, NY for conducting their family's fundraiser "Celebrate for Simone," which raised \$1,519 for CCF.

**Chess for Teachers** of Maspeth, NY donated 200 copies of "Chess Poems" which teach the concepts of the game for CCF's 2008 Walk event.

**Ben Horn** (8 years old), **Zachery Hart** (9 years old) and **Jordan Horn** (5 years old), of Surfside, FL sold Smencils, pencils made of recycled newspaper, outside a Publix supermarket in their hometown on Labor Day vacation. They raised \$92.13 for CCF.

**Alianna and Frankie Becerra** who, instead of presents, asked for donations to give to help other children. Together, they raised \$845 for CCF.

# Research Update 2008

Although conventional chemotherapeutic drugs are effective in many different types of cancers, their main disadvantage is that they also attack rapidly growing normal cells thus producing a host of unwanted serious side effects. Therefore, modern research in drug development focuses on designing new chemotherapeutic agents that inhibit the specific pathways or the specific protein molecules that are responsible for the unlimited growth of the malignant cells. One such pathway is JAK/STAT pathway. Inappropriate activation of JAK/STAT pathway signaling occurs frequently in many human cancers, and is associated with cancer cell survival and proliferation, as well as invasion. Therefore, the development of pharmacologic inhibitors of STAT signaling have therapeutic potential in the treatment of various human cancers.

To identify novel small-molecular-weight inhibitors of JAK/STAT signaling, we have screened to completion several libraries of either synthetic chemical compounds or natural products (plant extracts). Natural products: we have identified two independent plant extracts as candidates that showed ability to suppress JAK/STAT signaling in human cancer cells. One of them is found in extract from the plant "reed", which is reported to be used in Chinese herbal medicine for the treatment of leukemia. From an active fraction, we successfully purified two single compounds and subsequently determined their structures using Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR). The molecular weights of these molecules range from 300 to 350. Importantly, these molecules have never been isolated before from any natural products, meaning that these are novel chemical entities. We are currently investigating the mechanism of action of these molecules in JAK/STAT signaling. Meanwhile our collaborators are currently synthesizing derivatives of these two compounds to obtain more potent compounds using Structure-Activity-Relationship (SAR) study. The other candidate is found in extract from the plant "cluster-amaryllis". We are in the final stage of isolating single compounds from the active fraction.

Compounds from the Korea Chemical Bank: We have been working on a candidate compound that shows specificity for tyrosine kinase JAK3, which is a key molecule involved in interleukin 7(IL-7)-mediated signaling. JAK3 inhibitors have therapeutic potential as a new class of agents with immunosuppressive and anti-leukemic properties. We are currently conducting detailed analysis of its selectivity for JAK3 signaling using T-ALL cells. We also identified several fragment-like chemical compounds that are thought to directly bind to STAT3 and thus disrupt STAT3 dimerization. We are in the process of collaboration with pharmaceutical companies to develop these candidate compounds.

A library of pyrrolopyridine derivatives from University of Alberta: We have identified a novel compound, AUH-6-96, a small-molecular-weight inhibitor of JAK/STAT signaling. AUH-6-96 selectively affected cell viability only of cancer cells that express persistently active STAT3. Treatment with AUH-6-96 decreased cancer cell survival by inducing apoptosis via down-regulating the expression of STAT3 downstream target anti-apoptotic genes, such as Bcl-xL, Bcl-2, and survivin. Thus AUH-6-96 may have therapeutic potential in the treatment of human cancers harboring aberrant JAK/STAT signaling. Our work in this regard is being submitted for publication: "A small-molecular-weight compound identified through a cell-based screening using cultured Drosophila cells inhibits JAK/STAT pathway signaling in human cancer cells".

A structure-based virtual screening in collaboration with Q-Pharmaceutical Company: Virtual screening is a strategy for in silico evaluation of chemical libraries for a given target. We are collaborating with

Q-Pharmaceutical Company in Moscow to identify inhibitors of STAT3 using a computer-aided drug design. For this project, they are using docking software, such as DOCK and GLIDE, and various commercially-available chemical compound collections (roughly 1,000,000 of diverse deliverable molecules). They have begun their analysis and expect to finish the initial computer analysis in the very near future. Once we receive a list of potential hits, we will purchase the corresponding chemical compounds and conduct biochemical and biological assays. By doing this, we can expect to screen millions of compounds within a short period of time.

In summary, we have finished screening various chemical or natural product libraries to identify novel JAK/STAT signaling inhibitors and have identified several compounds as potential inhibitors. Moreover, we will soon initiate a project to examine the effect of our candidate compounds on bone marrow samples of children with leukemia (ALL or AML) in collaboration with the pediatric oncologists at New York Medical College-Maria Fareri Children's Hospital. We are currently putting our efforts into developing rapid and efficient screening methodologies and seek outside collaborators to develop our hit compounds further. We expect our work to result in several publications this year, and, in the near future, to the production more of new targeted chemotherapeutic drugs.

Gyeong-Hun Baeg, PhD  
Director, Children's Cancer Research Lab  
New York Medical College

## CCF Welcomes

**Amethia Holmes** became Clinical Research Coordinator at the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Group at New York Medical College in 2007. Her work focuses on various administrative aspects of clinical trials including opening studies, securing consent forms, enrolling patients, interfacing with review labs, maintaining study data, and reporting research results.

A cancer survivor herself, Amethia earned a Bachelor's degree at Cornell University and is currently enrolled in the Basic Medical Sciences Master's Program at New York Medical College. She hopes to pursue a career in medicine as a Pediatric Hematologist/Oncologist and often cites Dr. Jayabose, Dr. Tugal, Dr. Sandoval, and Dr. Ozkaynak as mentors and role models in her quest.

## Holiday Angels Deliver Big Smiles

This holiday season, like many before it, generous members of the New York Medical College community participated in the Holiday Angels Program. Managed by Cristina Cuffari, RN and Jamie Rosenthal, LMSW, the Holiday Angels Program purchases and distributes toys and supermarket gift cards to oncology families receiving outpatient chemotherapy on active treatment.

Patients and their siblings love the Holiday Angels Program because they may preselect their toy of choice from the Sears Wish Book and parents get to purchase delicious meals from local supermarkets. The Holiday Angels Program fills the infusion center with joy and smiles throughout the season.

### VOLUNTEERS

To become a volunteer or to start your own fundraiser, please e-mail us: [support@childrenscancerfund.org](mailto:support@childrenscancerfund.org)

## News from S. Jayabose, MD

Chief, Pediatric Hematology-Oncology  
New York Medical College- Maria Fareri Children's Hospital

**Certificate of Cure**, a recently launched support service program from the department of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology at New York Medical College-Maria Fareri Children's Hospital and fully funded by the Children's Cancer Fund, is designed to provide patients and their families with a complete dossier of their diagnosis, treatment, and cancer therapy. Moreover, Certificate of Cure can be used by them as a valuable source of information for ongoing health care with internists or any other specialist.

The goals of the program are: **1)** to reassure patients that when they are in continuous and complete remission for 5 years or more, they are indeed considered cured; **2)** to provide them with a detailed diagnosis and treatment summary including any major complications of treatment and a list of possible late effects of cancer therapy; **3)** to educate survivors and their parents about possible late effects of cancer therapy and to help them prevent or manage such late effects; and **4)** to encourage them to visit their pediatric oncologist every two to three years for a follow-up until 21 years of age, and to see an internist to monitor for any late effects of therapy after age 21.

Although there are many possible side effects of therapy, it is reassuring and encouraging to note that a vast majority of childhood cancer survivors lead a normal life, free of serious or debilitating late effects of therapy. The patient specific detailed information and history provided by the Certificate of Cure offers them support and guidance along the way.

## Casino Night Success



Social Worker Jamie Rosenthal and Nurse Ginny Escobedo

On Friday, October 17th, Social Worker Jamie Rosenthal, and Nurse Ginny Escobedo, hosted the First Annual Casino Night to benefit the Children's Cancer Fund.

The event was held at beautiful Beckwith Pointe overlooking the sound in New Rochelle, New York. Over 250 guests enjoyed delicious hors d'oeuvres and drinks along with additional food at pasta and carving stations, served by Beckwith's premier staff. They then got to try their hand at various gambling venues including Black Jack, Roulette and Craps.

Professional dealers from The Image Makers of Yonkers, New York, made playing fun and easy for all. The night ended with the drawing of over 40 raffle prizes including overnight stays at local hotels, dinners at various restaurants, sports tickets, and beautifully prepared gift baskets of every kind. The event raised over \$19,000 for CCF, and all those who attended had a wonderful time. Casino Night established itself as an event to look forward to each year!

# Save the Date!

## 17th Annual Children's Cancer Fund Teddy Bear Ball Honoring Dr. Jay



*Dr. Jay and Nimmy Jayabose*

On Saturday evening, March 21, 2009, the Children's Cancer Fund will celebrate the 17th Annual Teddy Bear Ball at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, New York and recognize the outstanding work of Children's Cancer Fund founder and medical advisor Dr. Somasundaram Jayabose. All are invited to attend this major fundraiser and festive event to recognize the importance and vitality of the Children's Cancer Fund and to bid thank you and farewell to Dr. Jay as he retires. Guests are welcome to dress in their finery, mingle with old and new acquaintances, enjoy a lovely meal, and dance the night away! Stories will be shared, happy and sad, of survivors and those no longer with us, and Children's Cancer Fund will honor Dr. Jay's lifelong commitment to improving the lives of children who are battling devastating diseases.

The 17th Annual Teddy Bear Ball will feature fabulous music, delicious food, a full and exciting silent auction, and a select offering of live auction specialties. Of note for 2009 will be the Chef's Choice, a live auction item featuring a specially prepared meal for a table of 12 Teddy Bear Ball guests to be served at the Teddy Bear Ball. This one-of-a-kind five-star culinary experience will be donated by the Westchester Marriott.

The Teddy Bear Ball is an annual reunion of families and friends that have one common denominator—pediatric cancer. Many have witnessed first hand the family crippling effects of childhood cancers as well as the wonders of cutting-edge treatments, compassionate medical professionals, and devoted social workers. The Teddy Bear Ball is a gathering of this special community linked by love, commitment, patience, and science. In addition, the 17th Annual Teddy Bear Ball is a great opportunity to show appreciation for Dr. Jay and his remarkable contributions toward finding a cure for all children with cancer.

Look for your Teddy Bear Ball invitation in late January or visit [www.childrenscancerfund.org](http://www.childrenscancerfund.org) for event details and commemorative journal rates and specifications.

### *Great fun had by all at the 16th Annual Teddy Bear Ball!*



If you are interested in placing an ad in the Teddy Bear Ball commemorative journal this year, please email us at [info@childrenscancerfund.org](mailto:info@childrenscancerfund.org) or go to our website and download the form to submit. **Thank you!**

# CCF WISH LIST

Please call Barbara McLain to donate at 914-594-3402

- USB Flash Drives (with 128MB or greater storage) with neck cord
- Entertainment Software for kids 5 years
- Norton Antivirus 2009 for 3 users
- New Toys
- Phone Cards
- Snack foods
- Gas Cards
- Bottled water
- Supermarket Cards
- Lysol wipes

*CCF wishes to acknowledge and thank Ed Yarmchuk who for many years has been our volunteer photographer for the walk. Ed will be moving next year. If you or someone you know would be interested in photographing the walk next year, please contact us. Thanks, Ed, for all of your hard work!*

## SAVE A LIFE:

- **Donating Blood** – A valuable way to assist is by donating blood or platelets. Call your local blood bank or Hudson Valley Blood Center at: 1-800-843-BLOOD
- **Donating Bone Marrow** – For more information about matching and donating bone marrow, call 1-800-Marrow2



I would like to make a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to **Children's Cancer Fund**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed

Please make checks payable and mail to: **Children's Cancer Fund, PO Box 658, Millwood, NY 10546**

Please bill my credit card:  Visa  MasterCard  American Express  Discover

Credit card no. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to make your doantion in honor or in memory of someone, or to celebrate a special occasion, please let us know and we will send an acknowledgement:

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_  In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

# Donate Your Old Car to the Children's Cancer Fund

***Easy, Quick, and Tax Deductible!***

Vehicle does not need to be in operating condition.

Boats (with trailers), trucks and RV's are welcome.

For more information and to donate now, visit [www.childrenscancerfund.org](http://www.childrenscancerfund.org)  
or email your questions to: [support@childrenscancerfund.org](mailto:support@childrenscancerfund.org)



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