



## **The Jared Branfman Sunflowers for Life Fund For Pediatric Brain and Spinal Tumor Research**

was established to raise critical support to further research resulting in treatment of pediatric brain cancer and cancers of the central nervous system. The Fund is under the direction of Dr. Pratiti Bandopadhyay, MBBS, PhD, MD, Director of the Bandopadhyay Lab and Attending Pediatric Neuro-Oncologist, Pediatric Oncology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Pediatric brain cancer is among the rarest and most challenging cancers facing the medical community and those children afflicted with them. The support that our **Sunflowers For Life Fund** has generated has realized many advancements in the understanding of these cancers and has directly contributed to the increase in successful implementation of targeted therapies, among other treatments.

One of the key ingredients of research is the availability of tissue samples for study. In this family of cancers, tissue samples have been exceedingly difficult to secure. The first project sponsored by our Fund in 2008 was to aid in the procurement of these samples. The sites were both national and international in scope and included Egypt, India, China and other locations. Our Fund was a main contributor to the gathering and transportation back to the USA of these samples, as well as the receiving, processing, storage, distribution, preparation, analysis, and overall use of these rare samples. This is cutting edge experimentation and research, and experiments have resulted in new treatment protocols that have increased the survival rate of patients with previously fatal and very difficult cancers to treat.

Of these cancers, low-grade gliomas are the most common pediatric brain tumors and additional therapies are urgently needed to treat the most challenging forms of disease. Dana-Farber is home to the only dedicated pediatric low-grade glioma (PLGG) program in the world, and the physician-scientists there are leading exemplary scientific studies and providing world-class clinical care for patients with pediatric brain tumors. These internationally renowned experts are spearheading basic science investigations to reveal key biological information about PLGG, including the shared and unique characteristics of gangliogliomas and glioneuronal tumors. These groundbreaking findings are driving the development of novel, more strategic therapeutic approaches for patients. This is yet another area that our Sunflowers Fund has contributed to, most recently by funding the hiring of two pediatric neuro-oncologists that will focus on laboratory effects that will impact clinical care for children with brain tumors. These two researchers are the first ever dedicated for pediatric oncology.

This is a quote from the most recent full report on our Fund: *Your generous philanthropy as well as the ongoing support of Team Kermit, plays a key role in advancing this research.*

Since 2005, **The Jared Branfman Sunflowers for Life Fund For Pediatric Brain and Spinal Tumor Research** has raised over \$6.8 million.

