



MENDEZ NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
TRANSPLANTATION FOUNDATION

ANNUAL MAGAZINE 2022



Linked
by Love

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR


Dear Friends,

So much happened in 2022 that it was hard to keep pace. We sought solid ground in a turbulent world. We engaged with our professional lives. We connected (or re-connected) with our friends. And we always made sure our families were safe. At the MNITF, we continued moving ahead with our project, *Linked by Love*. Meanwhile, in our own lives, I know being linked by love, has helped us all through these past few years. Since it resonates through all of our lives, on-screen and off, "*Linked by Love*" is the theme we have selected for this year's magazine.

This makes it even more fitting that it's the foundation of our annual appeal. The *Linked by Love* Red Carpet Premiere and Fundraising Event is February 28, 2023 marking the release of the first episode of our series the following day. It has a hard act to follow as *Rock & Raise*, our first fundraising event since the appearance of COVID-19, was a high point of 2022. The newly formed Fundraising Committee of our Board of Directors created a casual, outdoor event for over 150 people. It was exciting to see both new and familiar faces.

Despite the pandemic, we were not deterred from our work on behalf of the transplant community. We awarded four research grants in 2022. MNITF has now awarded 41 grants since 2015, for close to \$3.5 million. While the pace of medical research slowed the past several years, we did not. We will continue to support research that is impactful, innovative, and necessary in which funds are unavailable from other sources.





Before taking a look ahead, I wanted to reflect on several people to whom we have been linked for years. The MNITF has reached great heights because of the outstanding leadership of the Board of Directors. Our Co-Founders, Drs. Rafael and Robert Mendez, knew the significance of working with respected leaders with strong community ties. They took great pride in recruiting the “best” people. John Bedrosian and John King have been on the Board since the beginning. Alex Chaves joined shortly after developing a friendship with Rafael Mendez. After serving for decades, each of these wonderful men has decided to step down. The honor of their presence on our Board of Directors far exceeds any sadness at the end of their tenure.

Through the tumult of the past few years, *Linked by Love* has been a labor of love. After the years of planning, fundraising, research, and delays caused by the pandemic, 2022 was the year it blossomed. We filmed a six-episode series in March and April and are in post-production right now. We filmed supplementary videos to accompany the episodes, featuring transplantation experts, donors, recipients, and our cast. We are currently conducting a randomized-control trial using our finished footage, ensuring that audiences are clear on our messaging. We will soon be filming a PSA for TV/Cable and radio as part of our marketing campaign for the series; this marketing campaign will extend to both social and traditional media. Our website, LinkedbyLovetv.org, is already live. It’s where we will release weekly episodes beginning March 1st.

Finally, I encourage everyone to watch! Your backing made it possible. You allowed us to continue our work through extraordinary times. Thank you for your enduring support, and for helping more and more people gain the opportunity to be linked by love.

Nicole Mendez
Executive Director

ROCK & RAISE

An Evening of Singing and
Dancing under the Stars with
The Killer Dueling Pianos



The Thomas Edison Electric Company, inventors of electricity, launched their landmark company precisely 144 years to the day before the MNITF's October 15, 2022, "Rock & Raise" fundraising event. The MNITF honored this anniversary with plenty of electricity of their own as more than 150 people gathered outdoors at the Los Angeles ranch of Nadine and Alex Chaves.



The energetic evening corralled over \$100,000 for the Foundation while also serving as an informal valedictory for Alex Chaves, who has stepped down from the MNITF Board after 20 years of dedicated service. (His daughter-in-law Michelle Chaves has joined the board, ensuring a new generation of Chaves participation.) Executive Director Nicole Mendez recognized his service to the attendees. "Nadine and Alex hosting this event shows he will remain involved. We're not letting him get away easily," said Ms. Mendez. The sponsors and newly formed Board of Directors Fundraising Committee – Michelle Chaves, Melissa Grego, Monica Kirchner, and Frank Sanchez – were also acknowledged and thanked.

As the gathering enjoyed early-evening cocktails, Mendez addressed the event's importance to the Foundation. "Our scientific mission is crucial to the advancement of transplantation," she said. "But our educational mission is reaching out to under-served communities with options and care. I'm proud that the money we raise tonight will go to marketing our latest educational effort, the series *Linked by Love*." Mendez screened a rough-cut trailer of the series, which folds an educational message of kidney disease prevention, transplant options, and care for Black individuals into a powerful family drama.

The legendary Pasadena establishment, "Pie 'n Burger," catered dinner, fueling the attendees for three hours of dancing to the acclaimed "Killer Dueling Pianos." Despite the much-needed rain during the day, it turned into a beautiful night, as attendees enthusiastically bid for song requests, further increasing the MNITF's proceeds.



After three non-stop hours of high-energy entertainment and dancing, spirits remained high. Fortunately, the Fundraising Committee was well-prepared to transition to the after-party. "We knew those attending were committed to our cause," said co-fundraiser Grego. "It turns out they were just as committed to having a good time." The Southwest Café Taco Truck rolled in to refuel the guests, who had no desire to go home.



They were then treated to a live performance by the duo of singer/songwriter Shauna Madinah and guitarist RJ Root, kicking off an

after-party that lasted past midnight. "I think people would have stayed until 4am, if it was an option," said co-fundraiser Michelle Chaves, "it was so nice of Shauna and RJ to donate their time and tips. The Killer Dueling Pianos donated their tips as well." Fortunately, it was a Saturday evening and not a school night, as local middle and high schoolers helped work the event in exchange for community service hours for their schools. Co-fundraiser Monica Kirchner added perspective: "It turned into more of an event for all ages than a simple fundraiser."

The sponsors were responsible for almost 90% of our proceeds, thanks to donations of valet service from the Parking Company of America, vodka from Tito's, beer from Blue Palms Brewhouse and wine donation courtesy of Monica and Jon Kirchner. These donations and services allow a remarkable percentage of proceeds to fall to the bottom line.

"We raised over \$100,000 from our community," reflects Executive Director Mendez, who has seen the organization evolve to fulfill its mission. "Our Board of Directors and donors' passion is the same as our Research Advisory Board's passion to innovate. Their enthusiasm matches our experts' enthusiasm to educate. They are simply driven to participate. It makes these evenings electric."



ROCK & RAISE

**The Mendez National Institute of Transplantation Foundation
would like to thank our Hosts and Sponsors**

Hosted by

Alex & Nadine Chaves and Chaves Family

Rock & Raise Event Sponsors

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Linked by Love

U P D A T E

Most limited series lately seem to arrive loud, burn hot, and drop off (*Inventing Anna*, *WeCrashed*, *Super Pumped*), but the six episodes of MNITF's *Linked by Love* are built for the long haul.

From COVID-19 to kidney disease, Black and African Americans experience significant healthcare disparities in the United States. Receiving a transplant fits under this umbrella. The lack of community awareness and general information drives this, and no amount of flyers, pamphlets, or posters available at clinics, drugstores, or community centers can compete for attention in our video-saturated society. Even assuming video is the solution, getting people to watch a Netflix series with a million-dollar budget and a million-dollar marketing campaign is hard enough. As it is, it's hard enough to create a series people want to watch once. A show with a "message" that doesn't fit neatly into one demographic? Executive Producer and Creator Nicole Mendez has devoted years to cracking the code.

"It's a balancing act," says Mendez, also the Executive Director of the MNITF. "If you lean too hard into the serious side through your fictional characters, it can be too overwhelming or boring. If you lean too hard into plot, you sacrifice the message. It's finding that happy medium." Now that principal photography, editing, and scoring have taken place on *Linked by Love*, the rough cut is prepared for the randomized control post-evaluation study (see accompanying interview with LaShara





Davis). “A key aspect to this project has been research driven from creating the storyline and characters, to a focus group study of the script, and finally a scientific post-evaluation study to see that we have met our goals,” says Mendez. “The ultimate goal is to show the medical and entertainment communities that edutainment is effective in providing vital healthcare information to all members of the general public.”

The primary focus was to create a piece and associated materials that spoke to the issue of kidney disease, transplantation, and health equity among Black Americans. It will have a long life in educational, medical, and other relevant locations, spreading meaning through message. Making such a series feel relevant, “digestible,” and buzzworthy is a challenge, and a serious one at that. While the expression is often overused in the arts, one can safely say this series may be a matter of life and death.

MNITF’s *Linked by Love* promises to avoid pileups and potholes. Yet it’s also poised to go on for miles and miles in the “edutainment” arena. How did this happen? Because of the painstaking research involved in its subject matter and the extreme care accompanying its casting, plotting, and production. The consuming and concentrated commitment of those involved gave it an extra jolt.

The root of that jolt is an inspired production group. Flourishing during its 24-day shoot was a team comprised of a rare degree of diversity, with people of color (led by strong female characters) heading the cast – and the crew. This included their running the show as directors, producers, writers, and departments overseeing wardrobe, makeup, hair, and production design. All subscribed to the F. Scott Fitzgerald credo, “Our lives are determined by opportunities.” This group was motivated to give this series the look of an HBO special for a fraction of the price, but that aged twice as well. A majority female group of producers oversaw the COVID-safe project, shot mid-pandemic. Individual reels are also comprised of productions like this, and Hollywood responds to talent.

Apart from the quality reflected on-screen, lead director and executive producer, Joe Camareno, who oversaw the set, knew they were on to something special in another way. “We came in under budget,” he says, “although you would never notice it from the product. We knew we could use the remaining funds to shoot an interview series that would complement



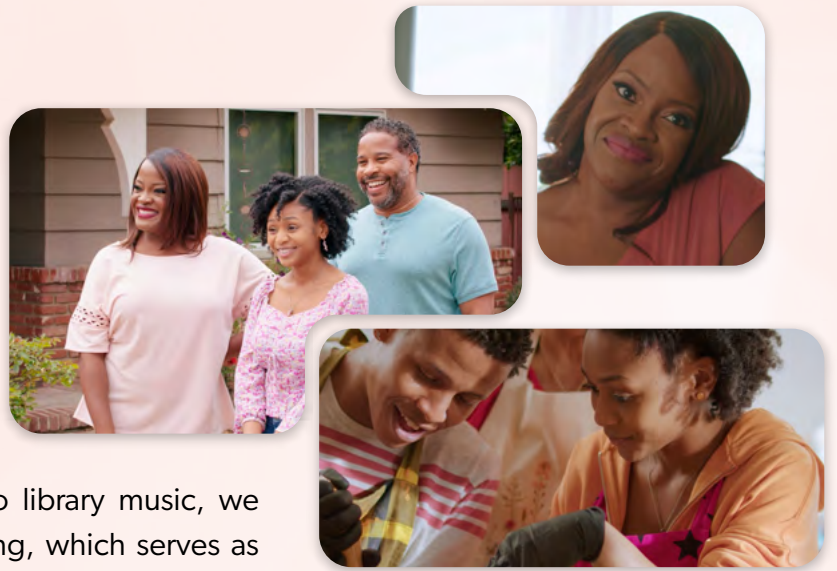
each narrative episode to speak with doctors, transplant donors and recipients, and the cast. The series was produced with passion, not just craft.”

“We played one other card as well,” says Executive Producer Mendez, who also produced 2012’s successful limited series *Fixing Paco* through MNITF. “Instead of scoring the show to library music, we were able to commission an original song, which serves as a connective fiber in a series such as this.” The track “Don’t

Nothin’ Get Old” by singer/songwriter Bianca Gisselle was not only used in the opening title credits – setting the tone for each episode – but elements, melodies, and stings were woven throughout the series to enhance mood. These subtle touches register subtly with viewers but openly with professionals.

Why is an appeal to professionals important? A streamlined “Director’s Cut” of the piece will be submitted to festivals, competitions, and other significant awards platforms. This version will be more accessible to a general population looking for plot-driven entertainment. It reads as a pure dramatic tale of a family matriarch amid a severe health scare requiring a transplant. The recognition can pay dividends in awareness and while serving as an extra testament to the hard work involved in creating *Linked by Love*.

Following the post-evaluation study as outlined above, the marketing and distribution efforts come to the fore as the March 1, 2023 release date for Episode 1 beckons. Episodes will be released weekly on the series’ website (www.linkedbylovetv.org). A celebrity PSA stressing kidney disease awareness will accompany the release, while a social media campaign targets viewers. Just before launch, the “Red Carpet Premiere” and Fundraising Event will take place February 28, 2023. With “Kidney Disease Month” slated for March and “Donate to Life” month in April, the March 1 release date has great significance. “In some ways the work has just begun,” says Mendez. “Breaking through the clutter is paramount and challenging. We know we have a high-octane car in the garage. We are going all out to get it on the road, turning heads.”



Yet it is never forgotten by the producers that *Linked by Love* exists to deliver a message delivering crucial transplantation information not only to a Black audience, but to the general population as a whole. “It’s easy to say, the series is good, and good for you,” says Mendez. “But we want to go further and say, this series can save lives.”

SAVE-THE-DATE

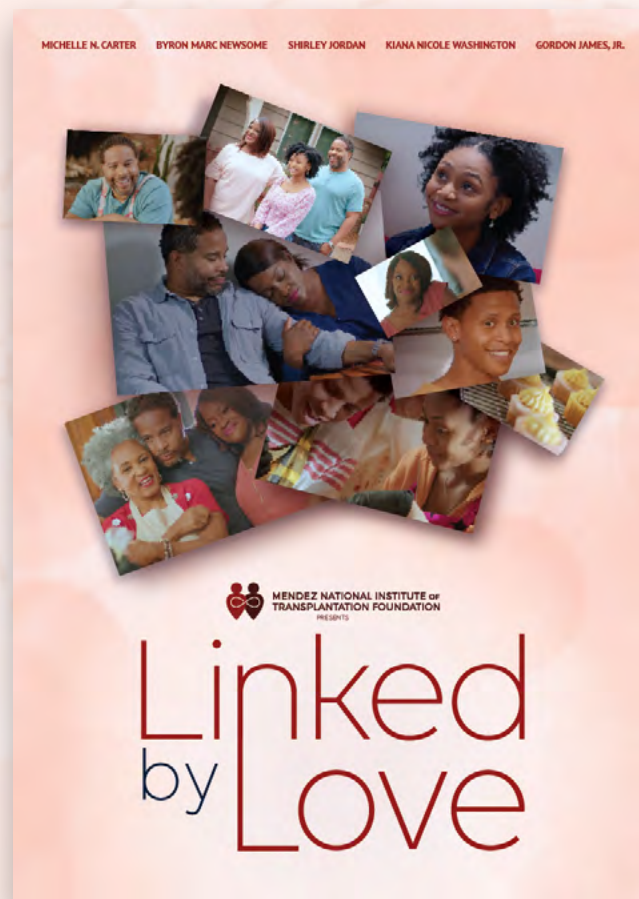


MENDEZ NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
TRANSPLANTATION FOUNDATION

P R E S E N T S

RED CARPET PREMIERE & FUNDRAISING EVENT

Tuesday, February 28, 2023



For Sponsorship Opportunities, contact Nicole Mendez (nicole@mnitf.org)

Linked by Love



W I T H



S E R I E S R E S E A R C H E R

LaShara A. Davis, PhD

Department of Surgery and J.C. Walter Jr. Transplant Center, Houston Methodist Hospital

Linked by Love is a six-episode “edutainment” series for the Black community about navigating the transplant process, from education, referral, evaluation, diagnosis, and organ wait-time, to post-transplant treatment, self-care, and medical monitoring, Black Americans lag other communities in all measured indices of these elements.

Dr. Davis advises the production about its accuracy by studying the effectiveness of the script, message, content, and characters, as well as the final product.

Phase 1 of this project was devoted to researching and developing the primary and relevant themes for the series and writing the script. Upon completing the script came a crucial test for Dr. Davis: “taking it on the road” for focus group studies using a filmed table-read of the script.

Q: **How many individual focus groups were there?**

Dr. Davis: We completed 13 focus groups with Black patients who had diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney disease, those who donated a kidney, those who received a transplant, and family members.

Q: **How would you characterize your findings? What went over best? Did anything need clarification?**

Dr. Davis: The focus groups were immensely helpful in outlining what Black patients connected with in the storyline and gave us insight into how to reach the intended audience more effectively. The participants reported that the series was authentic (55.3%), engaging (42.1%), and enjoyable (42.1%). Themes emerged around the Black community’s lack of awareness of common causes of chronic kidney disease (CKD) and the limited depictions of African American health stories on television.

The script elements that depicted the main character as a “superwoman” – as well as the health secrecy of African American families - were seen as culturally sensitive and caused curiosity about improving kidney health.

There were a couple of suggestions for reaching the audience even more powerfully. I think these spoke to people's own fears and experiences, which we addressed. There was a desire for earlier discussion of symptoms, more family involvement in the evaluation process, and discussion of nutrition as a factor in health and illness. The [script writing] team incorporated this. The people we met, will feel heard. They will feel seen.

Q: **Were there any surprises in your findings from all 13 focus groups?**

Dr. Davis: What surprised me the most was the number of people with diabetes and high blood pressure who were unaware they might be at risk for kidney disease. I saw the "light bulb" turn on for several patients. Several planned to check in with their doctor to see their kidney function after viewing just a single episode.

Q: **To close the phase, you wanted to face "the best." From over 1000 submissions, you were invited to present at the American Society of Nephrology's 2022 "Kidney Week." What did that mean to you and your team?**

Dr. Davis: That was the goal. We truly wanted to share the findings of the focus group study on the relatability and cultural sensitivity of the series with the community at large. I was honored that we attracted such interest; it spoke loudly about the interest and excitement about the project and its potential. As I spoke, I could sense the audience was engaged and that we were immediately seen as having struck a rich vein. This was validated when the post-presentation discussion spurred further interest among attendees about applying "edutainment" to other health conditions.

Phase 2 was the production phase for the entire series, plus supplementary videos with medical professionals, transplant recipients and donors, and the cast.

Q: **From a professional standpoint, what was your reaction to the production of the series? And OK, from a personal standpoint too?**

Dr. Davis: I was delighted to see the final production. Having reviewed earlier versions of the script and collected key insights from both patients and nephrologists on their suggestions for the screenplay, it was so fulfilling to see how things were changed to incorporate them. For instance, further depictions of the symptoms or impact of kidney disease on the main character. It was evident that the nephrologists helped ensure the medical accuracy of the series, providing key insight into the look and feel of an authentic medical encounter.

Phase 3 of the project is its post-production evaluation. MNITF will engage in a scientific study to determine the effectiveness of using an entertainment format to educate about health issues, specifically kidney transplantation and organ donation. There will also be a “test release” for the Black population as well as other kidney patients and families to gauge “real-time viewing in home environments.”

Q: **This upcoming phase is a large “hands-on” study for you. It contains a “Randomized Control Trial” (RCT) and video “product.” First, what is the timetable?**

Dr. Davis: We start imminently and bridge into 2023, for about three or four months.

Q: **And let's talk about this process, in overall terms.**

Dr. Davis: We are preparing to launch a randomized controlled trial to assess the effectiveness of the *Linked by Love* series about chronic kidney disease (CKD) compared to standard print education. In terms of logistics, we have compiled a group of African American and Black chronic kidney disease (CKD) patients, those at-risk for CKD, transplant recipients, living donors, and their caregivers. They will participate in a six-lesson, online education program about kidney disease and living donor kidney transplant.

Q: **And now you can drill down a little.**

Dr. Davis: Participants will be randomly selected to view either the standard written education or the filmed series. Both groups will be asked to respond to questions about what they learned, their attitudes about transplant, and their plans for treatment of kidney disease after viewing the education.

Q: **What do you expect your takeaways will be?**

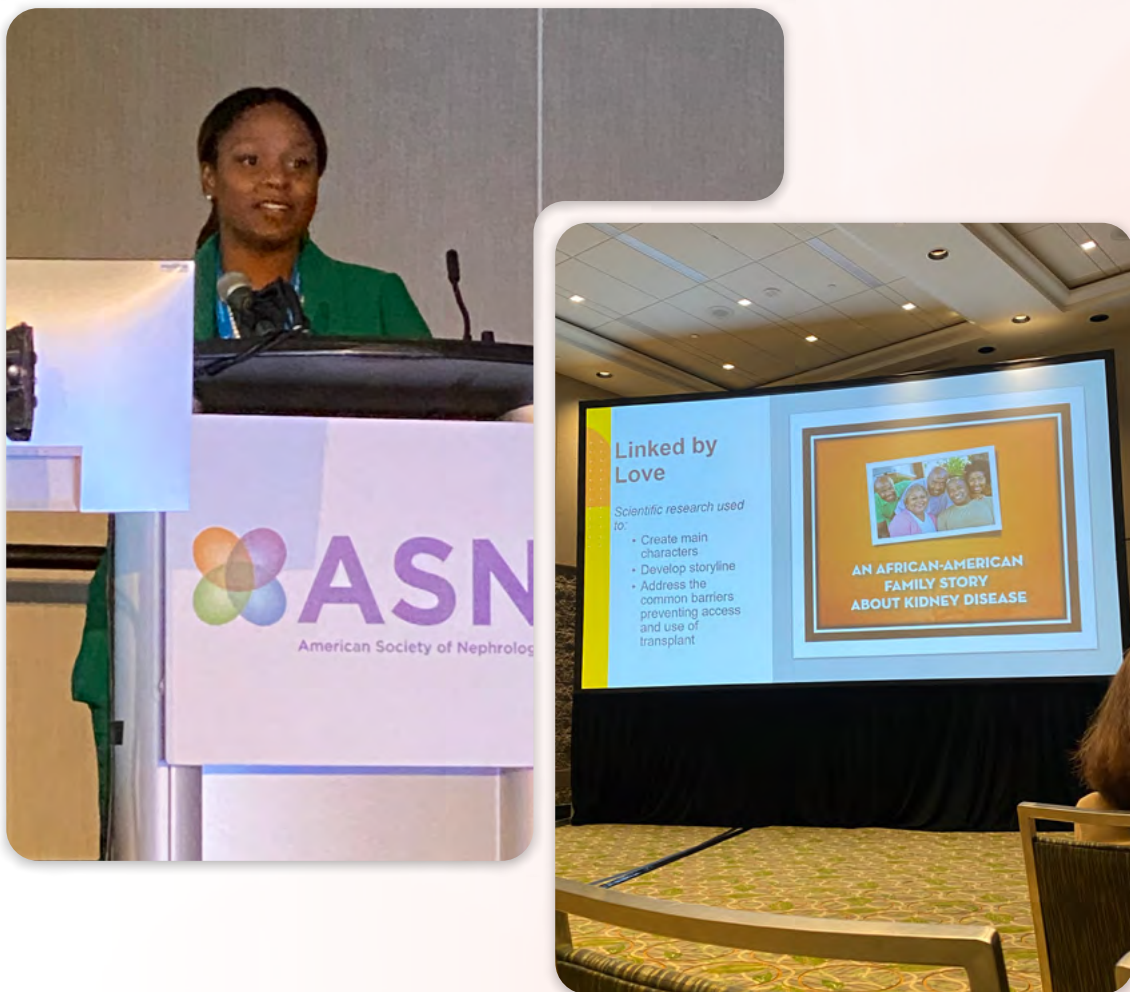
Dr. Davis: Results from the RCT will help us to learn about the effectiveness of edutainment in general and *Linked by Love* in particular, at motivating both the adoption of kidney disease prevention and the pursuit of transplant. Remember, we ensured the script was on point. That the shoot adhered to best practices. Within three or four months, I see the series being mass produced and included as part of the care process with earlier-stage patients and within dialysis and transplant centers.

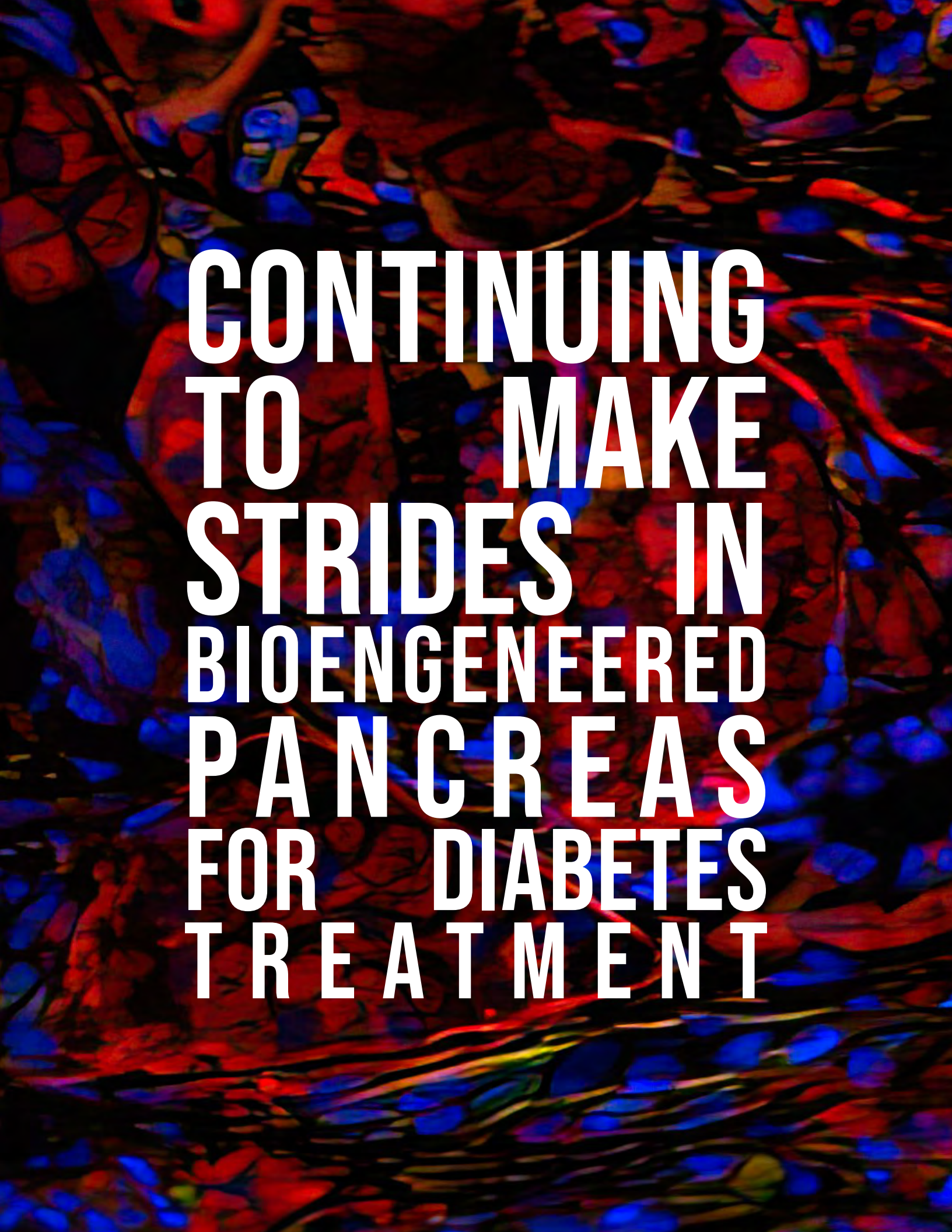
Q:

Final Question. On a personal note, what are your feelings about this project?"

Dr. Davis:

I am so very excited about this project! If the earlier focus group findings are any indication of the impact that this series can have, the production followed through. I believe this upcoming RCT will show a change in knowledge and earlier interest in prevention of kidney disease.



A microscopic image of cells, likely pancreatic islets, showing a complex network of cells. The cells are stained with a red fluorescent marker, and some cells are also stained with a blue fluorescent marker. The overall appearance is a dense, interconnected network of cells with varying intensities of red and blue.

**CONTINUING
TO MAKE
STRIDES IN
BIOENGINEERED
PANCREAS
FOR DIABETES
TREATMENT**

In February 2019, Dr. Harald Ott received the following grant: “Bioengineered Pancreas for Diabetes Treatment.” The specifics read:

Approximately 25% of patients suffering from diabetes are completely dependent on insulin supplementation, which is provided through exogenous insulin injection or islet transplantation. The Grantee’s goal is to build grafts that will overcome challenges faced by current transplantation approaches. The Grantee will design a hierarchical channel network with geometry optimized for perfusion and diffusion of molecules. The Grantee will optimize the membrane’s composition, mechanical, and physical properties to mimic the native islet niche. After optimization of the principal components and design, the Grantee will perform in-vitro and in-vivo testing to evaluate graft survival and function. If successful, completion of the proposed project will provide a novel yet easily translatable technique to transplant human islets.



The genesis of Dr. Ott's project was to treat and cure diabetes, by finding a way around insulin treatments or pancreatic transplants. Lifelong insulin dependence causes untold side effects; that would never be considered a cure. The first alternative, transplantation of the pancreas or the islet cells that produce insulin, isn't feasible due to questions of scale and immunosuppression that don't work as a solution.

One way to build a scaffold is to use a technique Ott developed called perfusion decellularization, in which an organ from a cadaver or other organism is washed clean of cells and other materials, leaving only the semi-transparent extracellular matrix behind.

For the pancreas, Dr. Ott used his MNITF grant for the first phase of replicating his core strategy: building a scaffolding for an organ, "seeding" it with the proper living cells (in the case of diabetes, using Islet cells capable of secreting insulin), and attaching it to a laboratory rat, which responded positively.

Upon this success, he moved on to pigs, a "large animal" study. He found success earlier in 2022, reaching the ability to implant the perfused "pancreas device" for treating diabetes. Upon creating space within his scaffolding for over 500k Islet Equivalents (therapeutic dose), he described the rest of the procedure in an email to MNITF: *"Yesterday I implanted two devices in two, by performing a procedure similar to an abdominal kidney transplant connecting our device to the abdominal aorta and caval vein. These were our first large animal survival experiments, baby steps... of course, but a big thank you to you all for making this possible."*

He is continuing the large animal studies to develop more sophisticated or specialized methods and believes that while the ability to do this will place him closer to receiving the FDA approval needed for human bioengineering, the ability to do this on human subjects is at least 10 years away.



Dr. Harald Ott



*Grants
Awarded
in 2022*

This year, the MNITF Research Advisory Board recommended the following four grants to be funded and the Board of Directors approved funding totaling \$399,930.



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY GROSSMAN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

From delays to discards: documenting novel approaches to increasing kidney transplants

As soon as a donated kidney is recovered, the race begins to find an appropriate recipient for the kidney, because transplant outcomes degrade as the organ waits on ice. Anecdotally, transplant providers report that they frequently decline kidney offers because too much time has accumulated before the kidney reached them in the allocation sequence, causing usable kidneys to be discarded. Using previously unavailable timing data, the Grantee will discover how many more kidneys might be transplantable, and will test whether certain changes to allocation policy could rescue these kidneys.

Principal Investigator: Sommer Gentry, PhD

Awarded: March 2022

Duration: 24 months

Amount of Award: \$150,000



ICHAN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT MOUNT SINAI

Understanding the immune and epithelial landscape of a novel human tracheal transplantation

The Grantee achieved a scientific breakthrough when they performed the first human tracheal transplantation. Evaluation of the human transplanted trachea demonstrated that the donor epithelium of the graft was replaced with recipient epithelium. The project objective is to determine if re-epithelialization of the tracheal allograft with recipient-derived epithelium decreases the immunogenicity of the graft and provides an opportunity to de-escalate or mitigate systemic immunosuppression. The objectives will encourage direct clinical translation.

Principal Investigator: Eric Genden, MD

Awarded: March 2022

Duration: 24 months

Amount of Award: \$149,930



THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

A Functional NK Cell Assay to Assess Antibody -Dependent and -Independent Allogeneic Stimuli

Kidney transplant patients are routinely screened for HLA antibodies both to determine compatibility with potential donors and to help diagnose antibody-mediated rejection (ABMR) after transplant. However, HLA antibodies explain little more than half of ABMR cases. The Grantee's previous research found that activated natural killer cells are often present in ABMR biopsies regardless of the presence or absence of antibody to donor HLA. This project aims to develop and validate a novel laboratory test for activated natural killer cells that can cause ABMR in concert with and independent of HLA antibody.

Principal Investigator: Luis G. Hidalgo, PhD, F(ACHI)

Awarded: September 28

Duration: 12 months

Amount of Award: \$50,000



THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN (CANADA)

iParent2Parent Peer Support Program in Pediatric Solid Organ Transplantation: A Feasibility Study

Parents who care for a child with a chronic illness often experience more stress, anxiety and symptoms of depression compared to parents of children without a chronic illness. The iParent2Parent (iP2P) program is a virtual peer mentorship program that will offer support to parents of pediatric solid organ transplant (SOT) recipients. This study aims to (1) determine the feasibility of the iP2P program for parents of SOT recipients, and (2) explore the preliminary effectiveness of the program. The iP2P program is targeted at improving the long-term health outcomes for both parents and patients.

Principal Investigator: Samantha Anthony, PhD

Awarded: September 28

Duration: 12 months

Amount of Award: \$50,000



HONORING LONGTIME SERVICE



JOHN KING

“I think the greatest reward is seeing the people you help out,” says John King, reflecting on MNITF Board tenure from 1993-2022. He served on both MNIT and MNITF Boards. “But you can’t do that without the people you work alongside.”

By trade, King was a “numbers guy” with a Master’s in Finance. By nature, he was a “people person” who believed in second chances. It’s rare to see a banker working with enterprises morph into a dynamo working with people. Yet mid-career, King veered into an altruistic lane, which included his impactful MNITF work.

His life’s initial revelation, however, was that no King was complete without a Queen. Serendipity led to a blind date with a Pasadena native who was named the celebrated “Queen of the Rose Bowl Parade” in 1959. Pamela and John King married one year later, with their family of four children growing to include seven grandchildren.

King ascended in banking, becoming Chairman and CEO of several national and global institutions. Like any good economist, supply and demand were always on his mind. He soon gave them an unexpected interpretation. “You go where there’s a shortage of people helping those who need it most,” King says of his ensuing pivot. He left banking for the Presidency of the Weingart Center Association, which helps homeless individuals join the workplace. MNITF Chairman Justin Dooley understood why. “He’s about community,” says Dooley. “That was where he thrived.”

King then joined Boards like college students join clubs. He became a Trustee of the University of Southern California. He was Founding Chairman of the Kidspace Children’s Museum. He sat on the Board of the California Hospital Center Foundation. And he was a key Board member of the MNITF, lured by his friendship with co-founder Dr. Rafael Mendez. He was never a figurehead. “Some people can pacify themselves by writing a check,” he says. “I think when you join a Board, you have an obligation to contribute.”

For three decades as the hub of transplantation science and innovation, the MNITF gradually saw healthcare consolidate. As the Audit Committee Chair with a fluency in sophisticated deals, King’s expertise helped the MNITF adapt and thrive. The Board boldly decided to sell its laboratory assets, using the proceeds to create an endowment. This allows MNITF to support groundbreaking research and develop educational materials that drive awareness and understanding of transplantation in new communities. The work was complex, but King was undaunted. “He wasn’t afraid to get into the forest,” says Dooley. “He was there for us.”

“King” is a misnomer, for his natural role is as peer, resource, and cheerleader. “They are meeting the challenge of going from one generation to the next,” he says of the MNITF. “I hope I was able to help on their path.”



JOHN BEDROSIAN

John Bedrosian has made a career of seeing around corners when most people haven't even entered the building. That periscopic vision is a unique trait, and Bedrosian has used it well.

He has seen inefficiencies in two businesses and capitalized by being a first mover. In 1968, seeing snags in the healthcare system, Bedrosian and his partners began buying hospitals struggling to develop infrastructure and lacking purchasing power. They founded and took public National Medical Enterprises spurring an acquisition spree peaking at 300 hospitals, expanding into other healthcare settings, and providing jobs for almost 100,000 people.

After more than 25 years in the healthcare industry, he then switched gears and moved fast into the internet and co-founded a platform upending vehicle sales. Autobytel gave buyers and sellers the means to connect and transact over the web, creating a new paradigm in car sales while giving each side new power and opportunities. Dealers selling could reach new customers, drivers could shop for deals, and the handcuffs were removed from the supply and demand relationship.

Just as innovation was a cornerstone of his business career, it was also a hallmark of his community involvement. It made for a perfect match: the pioneering nature of MNITF paralleled his own. Yet while part of him yearned for innovation, part of him emphasized permanence. He was an original at MNITF, giving it his most valuable asset - "Time," says Justin Dooley, CEO of MNITF. "Time is something John gave, over four decades of service. John was there at the founding, through this year. Not many people can claim that level of dedication and consistency."

Time and permanence have also marked other facets of his life. Married for 62 years, he and his wife Judith have three children and three grandchildren. Permanence also marks his commitment to his law school alma mater, the University of Southern California. In 2005, he added a permanent fixture to campus, endowing the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development's Judith and John Bedrosian Center on Governance and Public Enterprise. The Bedrosian Center examines the nature of democratic governance and how to improve it, a field with great personal and professional importance to Bedrosian, a first-generation Armenian-American.

Driving all of his success has been sound judgment. "John's business experience provided a great reservoir of knowledge," says Dooley. "We relied on him with all of our major pivots as we and our world evolved and changed over time." When one person who treasures innovation and permanence stays with you for 40 years, you reap benefits. You also adopt their knack for prismatic vision and become nimble in the face of change.



ALEX CHAVES, SR.

The political scientist and author George Friedman coined a phrase that explains why acting in the present and tackling what is in front of us is necessary. If you want to impact people, do it now, and do it often because it's what surrounds us:

"Centuries are about events. Decades are about people."

Alex Chaves lives for the decades and the people he sees. He doesn't wait for disasters or emergencies to act but spends his time working with and for people. Whether visiting sick children at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, working with former gang members looking to rejoin society at Homeboy Industries, or individuals looking for miracles to preserve their lives at MNITF, he's there. In precisely two decades at MNITF, he knew the mission. During his stint, the gains made in transplantation science were exponential, and Chaves ensured the organization remained consequential. The changes in healthcare were considerable, and Chaves emphasized that the organization remained nimble. Finally, bringing information to people of color in need of transplants was vital, and he aided in making sure the education they received was substantial.

His pride in having his daughter-in-law Michelle Chaves join the Board as he departed is tangible. "Alex is kind, giving, and classy," says MNITF Chairman Justin Dooley. "His input and effort over the decades have been crucial. He has facilitated a smooth transition to Michelle. He did not merely hand her a key: she was informed by the institutional knowledge he passed along to her. This left us well-positioned and allowed him to create a legacy, the greatest mark one can leave."

Chaves successfully built the Parking Group of America's entities into the largest off-airport parking company in the US. He sits on Boards ranging from the aforementioned Children's Hospital to the Homeboy Institutes, from the MNITF to the Foundation Board of Mexican Opportunity, among other Boards through the years. He doesn't do it for the accolades; when introduced to speak as the Los Angeles Archdiocese presented him with the Cardinal's Award, he told the audience, "I would rather chew glass than be up here." It rang true because his true pleasures are off-stage with family. Working with them, hearing their stories, or simply playing with his eight grandchildren. "Family" is his animating word.

Yet you can see his continued commitment to the MNITF family in how he and his wife Nadine hosted this year's "Rock and Raise" for the foundation: he's taking a step to the side but not a step away.

RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM AWARDS 41 GRANTS

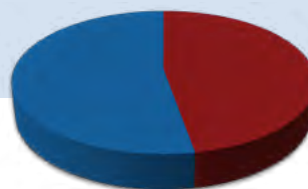
In December 2014, MNITF launched the Research Grant Program to improve clinical outcomes and positively impact the field of transplantation. To date, MNITF has awarded 41 grants, both nationally and internationally, surpassing \$3 million. The Research Advisory Board is comprised of senior investigators and experts in transplantation research who review the grant proposals and provide recommendations to the MNITF Board of Directors, who then make the final decision on awarding each grant. Due to the number and high quality of submitted proposals, the Board has awarded more than the budgeted amount from the Endowment. Contributions to the MNITF from supporters have made this possible.

Priority Areas of Research



Selection and Screening	9	22.6%
Organ Quality Assessment and/or Enhancement	3	7.3%
Organ Recipient Related and/or Post-Transplant Monitoring	15	36.6%
Patient Education and Empowerment	4	9.8%
Organ Repair and Regeneration	7	17.1%
COVID-19	3	7.3%
Total	41	100.0%

Early and Senior Investigators



Early Investigator	17	47.1%
Senior Investigator	19	52.8%
Total	36	100.0%



Grant# Organization & Location

1	Viracor-IBT Laboratories, Los Angeles, CA	21	UCSF, San Francisco, CA
2	Viracor-IBT Laboratories, Los Angeles, CA	22	UCLA - David Geffen School of Medicine, Los Angeles, CA
3	Donor Network Wes, San Ramon, CA	23	Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois, Lausanne, Lausanne, Vaud, Switzerland
4	The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH	24	Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, Los Angeles, CA
4a	University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA	25	IVIVA Medical Inc., Beverly, MA
5	Viracor-IBT Laboratories, Los Angeles, CA	26	University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
6	John Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD	27	Brigham & Women's Hospital, Boston, MA
7	Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA	28	United Network for Organ Sharing, Richmond, VA
8	Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Stem Cell Institute, Boston, MA	29	Columbia University, New York, NY
9	Western University of Health Sciences, Pomona, CA	30	Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA
10	Viracor-IBT Laboratories, Lee's Summit, MO	31	University of Alberta, Edmonton, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
11	University of Miami, Miami, FL	32	The Regents of the University of California on behalf of San Francisco Campus, San Francisco, CA
12	Joan & Sanford I Weill Medical College of Cornell University, New York, NY	33	IVIVA Medical, Inc., Beverly, MA
13	Viracor-IBT Laboratories, Los Angeles, CA	34	Columbia University Medical Center, New York, NY
14	The Scripps Research Institute, La Jolla, CA	35	Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA
15	University of Alberta, Edmonton, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	36	University of Alberta, Edmonton, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
16	Brigham & Women's Hospital, Boston, MA	37	University Health Network, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
17	University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, CA	38	NYU Grossman School of Medicine, New York, NY
18	Massachusetts General Hospital/ Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA	39	Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY
19	Cornell University, New York, NY	40	University of Wisconsin Madison, Wisconsin
20	University of Alberta, Edmonton, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	41	The Hospital for Sick Children Toronto, Ontario, Canada

WAYS TO GIVE

The Gift of Making a Difference

You can be an important part of continuing the mission of MNITF and helping to save and improve the lives of so many. Financial giving to MNITF creates unique opportunities for us to devote necessary resources to further advancing research and education. Below is a list of ways that you, your family, and friends can help keep the flame of hope alive for potential transplant recipients.



Directed Giving

With a planned giving strategy, you can earmark your contribution for any area of MNITF's work that you choose, including the Research Grant Program and Education projects.



Gift of Cash

This is the simplest and most common type of support. You can make a one-time gift, monthly payments, or pledge to donate over a one- to five-year period.



Memorial or Honorarium Gifts

This is a gift made in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one. A notification of your gift, with the amount undisclosed, is sent to the recipient indicated.



Life Insurance

Donating a no longer needed policy entitles you to an immediate tax deduction for the policy's current cash value. This applies to whole life and not term life insurance policies.



Life Income Gifts

The most common type of life income gifts are charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts.



Bequests

You can provide a donor's estate with a charitable deduction to offset federal taxes.



Amazon Smile

The Amazon Smile program allows you to donate 0.5% of all of your purchases on Amazon to MNITF. Go to smile.amazon.com, sign in with your Amazon account, and then search for National Institute of Transplantation as your charitable organization.

The MNITF website (www.MNITF.org) allows you to donate with a credit card by clicking on near the bottom of the homepage. If you would like to discuss giving, please contact Nicole Mendez, Executive Director, at (424) 358-4450 or via email at Nicole@MNITF.org.

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF SOMEONE WHO IS SUFFERING FROM KIDNEY DISEASE OR KIDNEY FAILURE?

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION OF ANY
AMOUNT TO SUPPORT *LINKED BY LOVE*.

1

Text the word
KIDNEY to 21000

to make a tax-deductible donation
of any amount to MNITF!

2

Go to MNITF.org
and click on

3

*Your generosity
makes our work possible!*

WANT TO GO GREEN?

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