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THE PABLOVE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2013 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Three Pioneering Pediatric Cancer Research Centers Receive A Cumulative \$150,000 in Grants Including Children's Hospital Los Angeles, the Mayo Clinic, and Roswell Park Cancer Institute

LOS ANGELES (June 6, 2013)—The 2013 Pablove Foundation Childhood Cancer Research Grant recipients were announced this month, awarding \$150,000 to three leading cancer research centers nationwide. This year's recipients are: Muller Fabbri MD, Ph.D. of the Saban Research Institute at Children's Hospital Los Angeles; Ying Zhang, Ph.D., of the Mayo Clinic; and Shilpa Pathak Ph.D., of Roswell Park Cancer Institute. The Pablove Foundation grants were selected by The Pablove Foundation's esteemed [Scientific Advisory Committee](#) based on their scientific excellence and innovation in addressing real and pressing issues faced by children with cancer.

"This year marks a major milestone for our young foundation, as we cross the half million dollar mark in funding innovative research to change the face of childhood cancer treatment," says Jo Ann Thrailkill, Executive Director of The Pablove Foundation. "As a parent, the promise that children will not just survive cancer, but thrive after cancer, is the promise most full of hope."

Each grantee will receive a \$50,000 seed grant to fund their proposal, with the opportunity to renew funding based on the promise of their scientific work. Seed grants provide initial funding for new ideas and young investigators, so that they may collect the results necessary to receive large-scale grants from the National Institute of Health and other sources of funding.

"This year's application class was highly competitive," says Dr. Leo Mascarenhas, Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee and Head of the Division of Oncology at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. "It fills me with optimism to know that such bright minds are tackling the issue of childhood cancer, and that The Pablove Foundation can jump-start their forward progress by providing seed grants for groundbreaking ideas."

Dr. Muller Fabbri's research (*miRNAs secreted by tumor associated macrophages and resistance in Neuroblastoma*) will address the challenge of drug resistance in neuroblastoma, which is the most prevalent cancer in infants. Dr. Fabbri is studying a unique communicating mechanism between neuroblastoma tumor cells and cells of the immune system. His preliminary research indicates that tumor cells send signals to immune cells, which in turn respond to the tumor cells by sending back signals to promote cancer survival and resistance to chemotherapy. By interrupting this cross-talk, Dr. Fabbri hopes to discover methods for preventing drug resistance in this difficult disease.

The project by Dr. Ying Zhang (*The role of the de-ubiquitinase USP44 in childhood germ cell tumorigenesis*) seeks to understand the origins and fundamental biology of germ cell tumors. Germ cell tumors are rare tumors that affect children and young adults whose biology

recapitulates stem cell biology in the embryo that went wrong. The proposal focuses on an enzyme USP44 that has recently been implicated as a key regulator of normal stem cell development. By hijacking stem cell programs, germ cell tumor growth is promoted. Dr. Zhang will study the effects of USP44 loss on germ cell tumor development and on normal stem cell biology. Combining studies of normal and malignant development will provide key insights into the origin and drivers of germ cell tumor growth which could be targeted to improve cure rates.

Dr. Shilpa Pathak's research (*Development of anti-tumor molecules targeting the Wilms tumor oncogene, LIN28B*) focuses on the development of a novel class of drugs called Pyrrole–imidazole polyamides or PIPs, as a Wilms Tumor therapeutic. LIN28B is a gene that has been identified as a contributing cause behind cancers like neuroblastoma and breast cancer. Dr. Pathak's institution has identified LIN28B as a potential oncogene in Wilms Tumor as well. The PIPs in development through this project will attempt to suppress the expression of LIN28B in Wilms tumor and has the potential to introduce a new class of treatments for Wilms Tumor, which is a kidney cancer occurring in young children.

“As a pediatric cancer researcher, I'm committed to a ‘cancer-free childhood.’ Support from The Pablove Foundation will certainly speed up my research in Wilms tumorigenesis by testing the effectiveness of ‘small molecule’ drugs as a treatment regime,” says Dr. Pathak. “The Pablove grant award is a stepping-stone for my academic career as it enables my transition from a post-doctoral researcher to an independent investigator.”

This is the third year The Pablove Foundation has awarded Childhood Cancer Research Grants. The foundation has also funded projects at the Lombardi Cancer Center at Georgetown University, Sydney Children's Hospital, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Children's National Medical Center, and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin/Medical College of Wisconsin. A full description of each grant is available at pablove.org/grants.

About The Pablove Foundation

The Pablove Foundation is named after Pablo Thraikill Castelaz, the son of Jo Ann Thraikill and Jeff Castelaz and the little brother of Grady Gallagher. Pablo was six years old when he lost his valiant yearlong battle with bilateral Wilms Tumor, a rare form of childhood cancer. The mission of The Pablove Foundation is to fund pediatric cancer research and advances in treatment, educate and empower cancer families, and improve the quality of life for children living with cancer through hospital play, music and arts programs. For more information on The Pablove Foundation, please visit pablove.org and follow Pablove on Facebook at facebook.com/pablovefoundation and Twitter at [@pablove](https://twitter.com/pablove).

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